

# ARDINGLY PARISH COUNCIL

Parish Clerk: Anne Rumble

Tel: 01444-459713

Email: [annerumble@msn.com](mailto:annerumble@msn.com)

Office: Tuesdays 10 am - 12 noon in Hapstead Hall, Ardingly

Minutes of Public meeting held on Thursday, 8 September 2011 held at Hapstead Hall from 8.00pm.

## MINUTES

### **Ardingly Parish Council**

#### **Present:**

Mr G Ruse (Chair)

Mr M Brixey

Mr T Clement

Mrs R Chalk

Mrs P Dennis

Mr W Meldrum

Mr K Monk

### **Mid Sussex District Council**

Gary Marsh, District Councillor and Deputy Leader and  
Cabinet Member for Planning & Regeneration

#### **In attendance:**

Mrs A Rumble (Parish Clerk)

**Members of the Public:** c. 180

George Ruse opened the meeting by welcoming parishioners, Parish Councillors and District Councillor, Gary Marsh.

The meeting was called to discuss two proposed, large scale developments in the village. The Chair invited residents to speak.

Claire Knight addressed the meeting stating that a petition was being circulated against the development at Butchers Field. She stated that traditionally, the village was predominantly an agricultural community and she was concerned that the development of Butchers Field may eradicate farming from the heart of the village.

In response to Sue Karle's question, referring to affordable housing, Mr Marsh advised that only housing developed on a rural exception site can provide affordable housing for local people and be 100% rentable. Ms Karle was concerned about increased traffic volume and speed in College Road if Standgrove Field was developed. Mr Marsh also noted to Ms Karle's question, that both the sites in question were outside of the village boundary.

Timothy Hughes maintained that expansion would open the floodgates to more unwanted development and any future development to the existing infrastructure would put pressure on the services and the volume of traffic through the village. An offer by the developer of Butchers Field to provide a community building with additional parking as an inducement, was considered to be unacceptable. This opinion was shared by Sara Frohmader.

David Hadden argued it was unlikely the Mid Sussex District Plan would reduce the number of houses for Ardingly identified in the South East Plan from 30. Under the South East Plan, Mid Sussex was required to accommodate 17,500 homes by 2026. If the village were to support some future development they would be able to have some input into the design and location which would complement the village character, as well as benefiting from the infrastructure contributions. However, he appreciated that a site which has outline planning permission could be sold on to a developer that then may increase the density of units to be built. As a result Mr Hadden was of the opinion that consideration should be given as to which landowner would act in the best interests of the village. Mr Marsh commented that, although difficult, conditions could be attached to the planning permission to prevent a developer increasing the housing density in the outline permission.

Alan Smitten recommended that there be no development and proposed that Standgrove be donated to the village for affordable housing.

Rob Lawson supported the need to build affordable housing to help young people stay in the village and encourage growth. He would be happy for both sites to be developed, a view also shared by Michael Denman and Darren Lawson.

Cheryl Bettam asked if consideration had been given to the protection of wildlife and advice obtained from the AONB to which there was general applause. In response, Claire Knight confirmed that she had contacted the relevant organisations and was awaiting feedback. Ms Knight also noted that the views of the National Park should be protected.

Timothy Hughes stated that he felt that there was in fact, a lack of demand for houses, as a number of homes in the village are currently for sale. This view was shared by Dunstan Rickard who added first time buyers cannot afford to buy in the village. Mr Rickard added that he felt the planning was a *fait accompli* and that in this case we needed to focus on what we want as a village and what we are going to get out of the developments.

Gary Marsh clarified comments made by Mr Hadden. He stated that he had attended a meeting the previous evening to discuss the draft District Plan where it was proposed the Plan would be based on a housing figure of 530 new homes per annum (a third lower than the soon to be abolished South East Plan). He reported that sites with existing planning provision would meet the 5 year housing supply without the need for new developments. This was in large part due to the fact that [Burgess Hill] had agreed to take a large number of houses.

Will Meldrum stated that an overly optimistic view had been put forward by Mr Marsh when in fact there was a period of uncertainty when it was felt that developers could take advantage of the situation. He noted that until the Localism Bill was passed, which could be after November, Mid Sussex was unable to demonstrate a five year land supply and therefore the presumption was likely to be in favour of development. He also asked Mr Marsh whether the District Plan was strictly evidence based as this could mean the District Plan was rejected. Mr Marsh confirmed that regional strategies would remain in force until the Localism Bill is law and confirmed that the Plan was evidence based. When questioned by Mr Meldrum, Mr Marsh stated that the District Plan was well advanced but that it would not go to central government for approval until May 2012. Mr Meldrum then asked Mr Marsh on what basis the Planning Inspectorate would base their inquiries after the Localism Bill had come into force. Mr Marsh responded that even though the District Plan would not at that time be approved, the Inspectorate would base their analysis on the District Plan.

Ben Duffy reported on the decision by the Government to allow a development at the end of his garden. This was initially refused by Mid Sussex District Council but later overturned on appeal. He was concerned that little could be done to prevent this happening again. Furthermore, Mr Duffy asked what Parish Councillors did if they had a conflict of interest. Mr Ruse explained that if a Parish Councillor had any conflict the Councillor had to declare that interest and would not be able to take part in the discussion or voting at that time. Gary Marsh reassured Mr Duffy that should a Councillor not declare a conflict of interest, it could result in imprisonment.

Andy Johnson witnessed that Traffic Flow Monitoring had been undertaken outside traffic peak flow times, ie during the school holidays. Mr Marsh confirmed that WSCC Highways Department would not accept traffic data taken outside of school time.

Claire Knight disputed the need for further housing and provided evidence that in the last 10 years, 75 new dwellings had been built in the village, an increase of 13%. Barbara Monk questioned the accuracy of these figures. At the end of the meeting Ms Knight provided the records of the houses built that supported her assertion.

David Gordon stated that houses that are affordable today, do not stay affordable forever as market forces take over. He questioned the desire for additional housing noting that if the village had bent to developers every time, we would be living in Haywards Heath not Ardingly.

General opinion of those attending the meeting seemed to be that Standgrove and Butcher's Fields are green field sites. There was concern that development would impact the village infrastructure (schools, increase in traffic, safety, effect on environment, drainage and visual amenity) and affordable housing would not be for local people. In addition, Butcher's Field was deemed a strategic gap in the village with protected views towards the South Downs.

During a brief interval in discussions, Sarah Chapman spoke about the Village Design Statement and its status with Mid Sussex District Council. She invited members of the parish to join the Steering Group that was to be established in order to take this forward.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and contributing to the debate, as well as appreciating the loan of equipment from the History Society.

9 September 2011

Revised copy 21.9.11